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ABSTRACT

This document reports the work and conclusions of a task force appointed to plan for the reorganization of collection development at Steely Library, a primarily undergraduate library with 13 professional librarians on its staff located at Northern Kentucky University (NKU). Task force activities included a thorough review of the relevant literature and in-depth interviews with collection development librarians from the university libraries at four universities identified as being similar to NKU in size, student body, etc. The task force plan, developed on the basis of discussions following its investigations, includes the following components: (1) the need for expert input into collection development from all library faculty; (2) the need for expert input into collection development from the university teaching faculty; and (3) formalized coordination of all collection development activities. Details of the proposed program are reflected in six task force recommendations concerning library faculty liaisons, a collection development librarian, and collection development by teaching faculty. Justifications for the recommendations are also presented. (Author/KM)

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RECOMMENDATIONS FOR COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT
Steely Library, Northern Kentucky University

This document reports the work and conclusions of a Task Force appointed to plan for the reorganization of collection development at Steely Library. Steely Library is primarily an undergraduate library with thirteen professional librarians on staff. The size of this professional staff and the broad, yet fundamental, spectrum of subject interests taught in an undergraduate univeresity require an approach to collection development which utilizes the entire staff in an efficient and effective manner.

The plan that was developed by this task force can be divided into three components:

1. the need for expert input into collection development from all library faculty

2. the need for expert input into collection development from the university teaching faculty

3. fomalized coordination of all collection development activities

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RECOMMENDATIONS FOR COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT

I. Introduction

A strong library collection is the foundation for both faculty and student academic endeavors at any university. For this reason, the librarians of Steely Library have always been dedicated to building a well balanced, relevant collection. During the library's early years, the focus was upon acquiring materials to build a substantial base. As the library has grown, additional collection development activities have been assumed by various library faculty members. Increasingly, the need to provide formal direction for all of the activities that affect the collection has become evident. In these days of limited budgets, increased coordination needs to be instituted for selection, collection assessment and weeding.

The Collection Development Task Force was appointed by the Library Director to examine this issue. The membership consisted of the Head of Acquisitions/Serials, the LRC Librarian, two Reference Librarians, and a Cataloging Librarian. The Library Director served as an ex-officio member. The Task Force was charged with developing recommendations for a rational collection development program. Primarily, the Task Force was to be concerned with broad organizational issues (e.g. identification of the many aspects of collection development, assignment of responsibility for these aspects, and administrative placement of the collection development personnel). These recommendations are to be presented to the library faculty for consideration.

To fulfill the charge, the Task Force undertook a thorough review of the relevant literature. Key publications were identified and studied. Based upon this research, a list of issues/questions was developed to direct the next research phase. In this second phase, several universities were contacted concerning their collection development activities. Efforts were made to identify those institutions similar to NKU in size, student body, etc. Based on these preliminary contacts, four university libraries, each with varying collection development plans, were selected for in-depth interviews. The collection development librarians from Wright State University, Western Kentucky University, Xavier University, and Florida International University were selected for these interviews. Each librarian contacted spent a great deal of time with the Task Force answering questions and discussing issues. After completing this second research phase, the Task Force met several times to discuss findings and decide upon recommendations.

The plan that was developed in these final discussions can be divided into three components:

1. the need for expert input into collection

development from all library faculty

2. the need for expert input into collection development from the university teaching faculty

3. formalized coordination of all collection development activities

Details of the proposed program as reflected in the Task Force's recommendations follow.

II. Library Faculty Liasons

Recommendation 1:

All library faculty members shall participate actively in the development of the collection, primarily by serving as liasons to particular academic departments. These department assignments should be made considering subject expertise and the need for an equal distribution of workload among liaisons. As liaisons, responsibilities of each library faculty member shall include:

1. Reviewing and selecting new materials as well as assessing present collections to build balanced subject holdings for their assigned areas.

2. Encouraging and facilitating teaching faculty participation in collection development activities.

3. Reviewing individual orders for library material in their assigned subject areas.

Recommendation 2:

Collection development activities shall constitute approximately 10% of each library faculty liaison's total responsibilities. Performance will be evaluated in this area by each librarian's direct supervisor in annual reviews with input from the Collection Development Librarian.

JUSTIFICATION

A collection development system based upon the work of library faculty liaisons has many advantages. Primarily:

1. Collection development constitutes such a broad responsibility that taking advantage of the varied and considerable expertise of all the library faculty can only improve the quality of the collection.

2. Numerous formalized contacts between faculty of the library and those in teaching departments insures that the library collection optimally supports the university curriculum. Moreover, these additional channels of communication are likely to encourage more teaching faculty to participate in collection development.

3. The librarians' expertise in viewing the collection broadly, looking for balance, can best be utilized in such a liaison program.

III. Collection Development Librarian

Recommendation 3:

To coordinate the work of the liaisons and to direct the entire collection development program (considering all types of materials and department or branch collections), a full-time library faculty position should be created. Since collection development work involves both public and technical services aspects, this librarian should report to the Library Director. The responsibilities assigned to this librarian are diverse, as he/she should have input on any library activity which affects the strength of the collection. These responsibilities should include:

1. Reviewing and revising the collection development policy and organization.

2. Coordinating collection assessment.

3. Formulating and allocating the materials budget.

4. Supervising library liaisons by assigning subject responsibilities, training, and providing feedback to each librarian's supervisor concerning his/her collection development performance.

5. Educating teaching faculty concerning collection development policies and procedures.

6. Coordinating gifts/exchanges, binding, and preservation activities.

7. Accepting/rejecting orders which fall outside of the scope of the collection or its budget.

8. Serving on the University Curriculum Committee.

In all of these areas of responsibility, the Collection Development Librarian will be working with other library faculty, sometimes on an on-going basis and at other times with ad hoc committees working on special projects.

Recommendation 4:

The Collection Development Librarian position created shall be a new full-time faculty position added to the present Steely library staff. If budget constraints prohibit acceptance of this recommendation, less desirable alternatives (in order of preference) follow:

1. A Collection Development Librarian position shall be established temporarily as a new half-time faculty position.

2. The coordination of collection development activities shall be temporarily undertaken by a committee of library faculty now on staff. This committee would consist of the Head of Acquisitions/Serials, Gifts Coordinator(s), Head of Reference and the Liaison /Approval Form Coordinator. This option would necessitate a slower development of collection development activities than would occur if a full-time position were created.

3. The coordination of collection development activities shall be temporarily assumed by one library faculty member currently on staff, with a corresponding cut in services/activities now being accomplished.

Recommendation 5:

The Collection Development Librarian shall be adequately supported by paraprofessional/student staff and physical facilities. This support staff should also be available to assist all liaisons in their collection development activities.

JUSTIFICATION

Collection development is more than the sum of selecting, acquiring, budgeting, allocating, and weeding. All of these activities can be taking place without any collection development occurring. Collection development is a systematic building and strengthening of the library's holdings based on long range plans rather then random, individual decisions on selecting and weeding. Separate liaisons cannot make and implement these long range plans. Centralized direction is essential. Moreover, as more individuals become actively involved in the collection development program, simple logistics demand an increased level of coordination. A new full-time faculty position, with substantial support staff, is necessary to effectively develop our collection. The alternatives to a new full-time Collection Development Librarian are less desirable; if one of them is adopted, the collection development program will not progress and other programs will suffer. The range of library services now offered to the university community could not even remain at status quo if another major program is added to the responsibilities of the present faculty and staff.

IV. Collection Development by Teaching Faculty.

Recommendation 6:

Participation in collection development by teaching faculty shall be encouraged. To facilitate this participation, a library contact person from each academic department shall be designated. Each contact person shall:

1. Serve as a channel of communication between the library faculty liaison and his/her department's own faculty.

2. Encourage broad-based participation on the part of his/her departmental colleagues in collection development activities.

3. Collect and forward orders for library materials on an on-going , regular basis.

JUSTIFICATION

The subject expertise of teaching faculty is essential in collection development in order to meet curriculum needs. Therefore, everything possible should be done to include their input in collection building and assessment activities.

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